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UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene strategies for 2006-2015

Summary

The overall objective of UNICEF in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is to contribute to the realization of children's rights to survival and development through promotion of the sector and support to national programmes that increase equitable and sustainable access to, and use of, safe water and basic sanitation services, and promote improved hygiene.

This paper describes a new set of strategies that will be applied by UNICEF country offices in assisting governments, communities and families to achieve specific targets related to the Millennium Development Goals. It has been developed through a process of intensive consultation with a wide range of UNICEF staff and key partners.

The strategies are grouped into three distinct packages of support: one, for countries where water, sanitation and hygiene are priority interventions; two, for countries affected by emergencies; and three, for all other countries supported by UNICEF. The packages represent an evolutionary development from the 1995 strategies, based on lessons learned over the last ten years and a changing programming context.

Chapter V contains a draft recommendation for approval by the Executive Board.

* E/ICEF/2006/1.

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I. Background

A. The importance of water, sanitation and hygiene

1. In the decade since the publication of the 1995 paper on UNICEF strategies in water and environmental sanitation (E/ICEF/1995/17 and Corr.1), a growing body of evidence has demonstrated the critical importance of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for children. Increasing the equitable access to and use of safe water and basic sanitation services and improved hygiene practices will reduce child mortality, improve health and education outcomes, and contribute to reduced poverty and sustainable development as a whole.

2. The Millennium Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals start with children: they can only be met and sustained when the rights of children to health, education, protection and equality are realized. The Millennium Declaration and the Goals recognize the importance of safe drinking water and sanitation to meet these global commitments. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 set the target of halving, by 2015, the proportion of people who do not have sustainable access to basic sanitation. This is now an integral part of Target 10 under Millennium Development Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability: halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

3. Two core human rights instruments — the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women — explicitly recognize the right to water. The latter also recognizes the importance of sanitation. In 2002, the United Nations formally declared access to domestic water supply a human right in and of itself, through General Comment No. 15 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

WASH and disease

4. Inadequate and unsafe water, poor sanitation, and unsafe hygiene practices are the main causes of diarrhoea, which results in at least 1.9 million under-5 child deaths annually. Diarrhoea morbidity rates are increasing — children in developing countries average four to five debilitating bouts of diarrhoea per year, which can cause and exacerbate malnutrition and result in long-term growth stunting. The only way to sustainably reduce this massive burden of disease is through the use of safe drinking water, sanitation and improved hygiene practices, in particular hand-washing with soap.

5. Water, sanitation and hygiene are also linked to many other diseases that kill children or stunt their development, including helminth infections, dracunculiasis, trachoma, cholera, fluorosis and arsenicosis. Children (and adults) living with HIV/AIDS, because of their weakened immune systems, are especially susceptible to the debilitating effects of persistent bouts of diarrhoea. There is also emerging evidence linking better hand-washing practices with reduced incidence of acute respiratory infections.

A prerequisite for education and development, a community priority and a human right

6. WASH is an important prerequisite for ensuring the right to basic education. Children commonly miss school because they are too busy fetching water or are sick with a water-related disease. Girls — especially older girls who have reached the age of menarche — are often reluctant to stay in school when toilet and washing facilities lack privacy, are unsafe or are non-existent. Even when children are in school, they are often not meeting their learning potential due to mental stunting caused by helminth infections and diarrhoea. Programmes that combine improved sanitation and hand-washing facilities in schools with hygiene education can improve the health of children for life. Where properly integrated into wider community initiatives, school-based programmes also promote positive change in communities as a whole.

7. There are strong links between WASH and the economic and social development of communities and nations. Poor hygiene, sanitation and water exacerbate poverty by reducing productivity and elevating health-care costs. Safe water sources near homes reduce the time-wasting drudgery of fetching water (a burden borne disproportionately by women and girls) and provide opportunities for poor families to engage in small-scale productive activities such as market gardening. Armed conflict and natural disasters that prevent households from using safe drinking water and practising hygiene especially impact on the most vulnerable, including women and children.

8. Communities consistently cite reliable and accessible water sources for household use as a development priority and increasingly stress the importance of sanitation as well. A clean living environment, including access to sanitary means for excreta disposal and adequate water supplies for washing, is linked not just to well-being but to the dignity of families and communities.

9. The payback resulting from achieving Millennium Development Goal Target 10 would include the following economic benefits: from illnesses avoided, an estimated $7.3 billion per year; from lower morbidity and mortality, an annual global value of almost $750 million; and from time saved from having water supplies closer to homes and toilets nearby, the increased production, higher school attendance and more leisure time is valued at an annual amount of $64 billion. The economic benefits would therefore range from $3 to $34 per $1 invested, depending on the region. The World Health Organization (WHO) study from which these figures are taken shows that remarkable additional returns would accrue if simple household water treatment accompanied the drinking water and sanitation improvements.[1]

WASH and the Millennium Agenda

10. The 2000 Millennium Declaration commits governments around the world to a clear agenda for combating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, discrimination against women and environmental degradation.

11. Because WASH is linked in many ways to people's livelihoods and sustainable development in general, it is an important input not just for Target 10 of Millennium

[1] Source: Guy Hutton and Laurence Haller, "Evaluation of the costs and benefits of water and sanitation improvements at the global level" (WHO, 2004).

Development Goal 7 but for all of the Goals. WASH is a key input for the achievement of universal primary education and reductions in child mortality (Goals 2 and 4) and is directly linked to the eradication of poverty and hunger, the empowerment of women, improvements in maternal health and the reduction of diseases (Goals 1, 3, 5 and 6). In addition, the programme synergies made possible by the strategic coordination of Health and Nutrition with WASH interventions within country programmes will allow UNICEF to make significant contributions to the health and environment objectives of the Millennium Agenda.

B. Sector status

12. Since 1990, over 1 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water and sanitation services. Nonetheless, 2.6 billion people — over half of the developing world's population — do not have improved sanitation facilities, and 1.1 billion are still using water from unimproved sources. Barely one third of the population of South Asia uses improved sanitation facilities. In sub-Saharan Africa, sanitation coverage increased by only 4 per cent between 1990 and 2002, and in nine countries, rural sanitation coverage is less than 10 per cent.

13. In addition to coverage disparities between countries and regions, there are significant inequities *within* countries: clear rural-urban disparities as well as coverage and service level disparities between richer and poorer households. The urban poor usually have very low access to water and sanitation services, and pockets of people — such as indigenous groups — often have even lower access.

14. Global coverage figures on improved drinking water (see table 1) are likely to be lower than what is indicated because they do not include information on the quality of water of specific sources. Microbiological contamination of water sources is a common problem in many countries and chemical contamination (notably arsenic and fluoride) is increasingly a concern. New efforts are under way to address water-quality monitoring within the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP).

Table 1
Water and sanitation coverage (2002) and numbers of people to be served to reach the Target 10

UNICEF Regions	Improved Drinking Water					Improved Sanitation				
	2002 (per cent coverage)			To reach the Drinking Water targets by 2015		2002 (per cent coverage)			To reach the Sanitation targets by 2015	
Regional summaries	Urban	Rural	Total	Total Per cent coverage	Population to be served 2002-2015 (millions)	Urban	Rural	Total	Total Per cent coverage	Population to be served 2002-2015 (millions)
Eastern and Southern Africa	87	43	56	74	139	60	27	37	67	168
Western and Central Africa	78	45	58	74	153	52	24	35	65	182
Middle East and North Africa	95	77	87	93	123	88	52	72	84	139
South Asia	94	80	84	85	296	64	23	53	58	546
East Asia and Pacific	92	68	78	86	416	72	35	50	65	542
Latin America and Caribbean	95	69	89	91	98	84	44	75	84	135
CEE/CIS/Baltic States	98	79	91	95	21	92	62	81	93	50
Developing countries	92	70	79	85	1 253	73	31	49	67	1 755
Industrialized countries	100	100	100	100	44	100	100	100	100	45
World	95	71	83	89	1 291	79	35	58	74	1 807
Sub-Saharan Africa	82	44	57	74	292	55	26	36	66	350
Least developed countries	80	50	58	76	339	58	27	35	61	365

Source: WHO/UNICEF JMP, 2005.

II. UNICEF experience and lessons learned

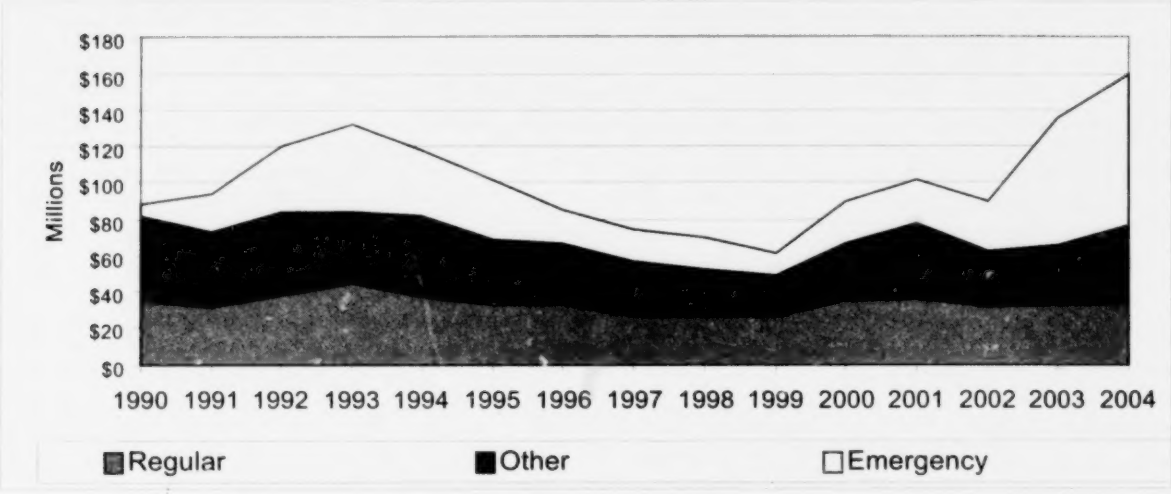
15. Since the 1960s, when UNICEF supported mainly water supply in emergencies, the focus has widened to include sanitation and hygiene education. Water supply and sanitation is a component of most UNICEF-Government country programmes and the overarching United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which involves a range of United Nations agencies working in partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), communities and the private sector.

16. In 2004, UNICEF supported WASH activities in 91 countries, concentrated in Africa, South Asia and East Asia but also including countries the Americas, the Middle East and Central Asia. This broad geographic scope makes UNICEF the largest single agency working in the sector today.

17. UNICEF WASH expenditure in 2004 was $160 million, the highest-ever annual expenditure in this area, representing 12 per cent of total UNICEF programme expenditure. The vast majority of the funds was spent at the country level; less than 1 per cent was incurred at the global or regional level.

18. At the country level, programmes vary significantly in scope. Large programmes typically have annual budgets of around $10 million and support a wide range of water, sanitation and hygiene activities, often country-wide. Other programmes are much smaller and focus activities on particular geographic areas (e.g., poor indigenous areas in the Americas) or on specific programme elements that require special support, such as hand-washing campaigns or water quality.

Figure 1
UNICEF WASH expenditure, 1990 to 2004
(In millions of United States dollars)



19. UNICEF support to school-based WASH activities has increased significantly in recent years. By 2004, 76 country offices were supporting some level of school-based activity, and in some countries school-based interventions are a major component of the WASH programme.

20. The scope of emergency WASH activities is rapidly expanding. In 2004 and 2005, UNICEF took a lead role in emergencies in Ethiopia, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Sudan, the tsunami-affected countries in South-East Asia and in some 25 other countries, with the type of interventions guided by the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in emergencies. In 2005, in the context of the Humanitarian Response Review and the Intergovernmental Discussion on Reforms of the United Nations Humanitarian System, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) designated UNICEF as the lead agency for the cluster on water supply and sanitation. As cluster lead, UNICEF will be accountable for ensuring that the water supply and sanitation aspects of emergency preparedness and response are both adequate and predictable.

21. In many countries, UNICEF is the only agency to work at all levels: local (with communities), intermediate (with states, provinces, districts, municipalities, etc.) and national; and with all stakeholders — government, communities, local and international NGOs and the private sector. This broad presence allows UNICEF to identify critical gaps and knowledge requirements in water supply and sanitation. It also enables UNICEF to recommend necessary change, based on in-country experience and evidence. These advantages, along with the ability to draw on expertise and experience from a number of country programmes, make UNICEF a valued partner in the sector.

Key lessons learned

These are based on the recent collective experience of UNICEF and other sectoral stakeholders.

1. Taking a leading role in ensuring that all partners accord higher priority to the sector is a critical role of UNICEF, and includes creating awareness of the increased coverage and budget requirements to achieve the Millennium Development Goal sector targets.

2. Hygiene behaviour change is a key factor for saving children's lives.

3. Sustainable service delivery depends on decentralized authority; public and private sector resources and expertise, with adequate central support; and communities, empowered to make well-informed choices in technical, management and financial options.

4. Central support through an enabling policy environment, along with adequate funding and sufficient human resources capacity, at all levels, are prerequisites for going to scale.

5. Reaching the poor and addressing gender inequities require priority attention and specific techniques.

6. Effective leveraging of funds and targeting of activities require high-quality, disaggregated information and strategic partnerships.

7. Intersectoral approaches maximize sustainable impact.

8. Household water security depends on the good management and equitable distribution of freshwater resources.

9. Water quality must be assured.

10. Preparedness and coordination are key prerequisites for an effective response in emergencies.

III. The UNICEF contribution to WASH

A. Objective and targets

22. The overall objective of UNICEF in WASH is to contribute to the realization of children's rights to survival and development through global and national promotion of sector investment and support to programmes that increase equitable and sustainable access to, and use of, safe water and basic sanitation services, and promote improved hygiene. UNICEF aims to work in close partnership with its sister agencies, but above all in support of nationally identified priorities evolving from national development plans in support of accelerated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

23. For the 10-year period 2006 to 2015, UNICEF support for the sector will be guided by two overarching targets that have been widely recognized by governments and the international support community:

(a) **Target 1: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation** (Millennium Development Goal Target 10)[2]

(b) **Target 2: Ensure that all schools have adequate child-friendly water and sanitation facilities and hygiene education programmes** (now widely recognized as a sector priority — endorsed at the World Summit for Sustainable Development and by the Commission for Sustainable Development)[3]

24. The revised WASH strategies have been developed in tandem with the formulation of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006-2009 and are designed to contribute specifically to the MTSP targets in the focus areas of young child survival and development and basic education and gender equality.

25. The WASH targets will not be achieved through the efforts of UNICEF alone but rather through the coordinated and concerted efforts of a wide range of sector stakeholders. Within the primary partnership with national governments, UNICEF will collaborate closely with agencies that include including the World Bank, the Water and Sanitation Program, the Regional Development Banks, WHO, the International Water and Sanitation Centre, the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council.

B. Packages of support

26. To help achieve the targets by 2015, UNICEF must focus its efforts both geographically and strategically. The three packages of support described below outline the extent of UNICEF engagement in different countries. Support will range from playing a major role and committing significant resources in priority countries to acting as advocate and provider of limited technical support in other countries.

[2] Note that the baseline year for Target 10 is 1990.

[3] The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development emphasizes sanitation in schools as a priority action. The 13th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2005 reiterated this position and also emphasized the need for hygiene education in schools.

Guiding principles

UNICEF-assisted WASH programmes are governed by these principles within the overarching framework of a human-rights based approach to programming.

1. **Rights-based programming.** WASH strategies and programmes will be guided by a rights-based approach.

2. **Working in-country, with governments.** The primary focus will continue to be supporting governments, in the context of their Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans (PRSPs) and sector-wide approaches (SWAps), through the UNICEF country programme process and the UNDAF.

3. **Working with partners to develop innovative approaches and leverage resources.** UNICEF will use its position as a lead WASH agency to encourage greater coordination and collaboration, improve knowledge management, use and sharing, and actively leverage resources for the sector.

4. **Gender.** Women and girls have a central role in WASH, as the main providers of domestic water supply and sanitation and as maintainers of a hygienic home environment. UNICEF will advocate for the full involvement of women, particularly in decision-making roles, in all WASH activities.

5. **Pro-poor approaches.** Meeting the rights of the poor to WASH is at the heart of the UNICEF mission. UNICEF will undertake concerted efforts in advocacy for the development of improved poverty-specific approaches and improved monitoring and mapping to identify and effectively reach the poor.

6. **Evidence-based advocacy and programme design.** UNICEF will aim to ensure that programme designs are based on the best available information and knowledge and that advocacy is based on rigorously analysed evidence.

7. **Learning-based approaches guided by effective knowledge management.** UNICEF will seek to use its role as a sector leader to encourage an open, enquiring and learning-based approach to providing WASH services to the poor and will also support the consolidation of quality sector knowledge, both nationally and globally.

27. Three distinct packages of support have been developed:

(a) **Comprehensive package** in 60 countries with high child mortality and low WASH coverage:

(i) Support to water supply and sanitation services

(ii) Support to WASH in schools

(iii) The basic package (see below)

(b) **Emergency package** in emergency countries:

(i) Meeting the WASH-related Core Commitments for Children efficiently

(c) **Basic package** in all other countries where UNICEF supports programmes:

(i) Hygiene improvements

(ii) Drinking water safety

(iii) Monitoring global indicators

(iv) Emergency preparedness

28. The **comprehensive package** is designed to contribute to the achievement of both WASH target 1 (water supply and sanitation Target 10 of the Millennium Development Goals) and target 2 (WASH in schools) in 60 priority countries. These countries are identified based on criteria related to under-five mortality rates, total child deaths, rural water supply and sanitation coverage (including both national percentages and absolute numbers of uncovered populations), basic education and current rates of progress for achieving sectoral targets.

29. The **emergency package** will be applied on the basis of need in countries and areas where urgent WASH interventions are required to prevent the death and suffering of children, and to protect their rights. The scope and range of activities is defined in the CCCs.

30. The **basic package** is for all other countries where UNICEF has a programming presence. The range of activities supported and strategies pursued by UNICEF will be limited to advocacy and technical support to governments and other sectoral partners in the four areas outlined in paragraph 27 above.

31. The structure of UNICEF-supported WASH programmes at the national level will be guided by the strategies outlined below. The elements will be determined through a four-step process: (i) working with partners to ensure adequate priority for the sector; (ii) defining national sectoral priority interventions through Government-led national mechanisms (in the context of their PRSPs and SWAps), through the UNICEF country programme process and the UNDAF, involving United Nations agencies and other sectoral stakeholders; (iii) determining which interventions are already being covered by others; and (iv) then deciding which of these can and should be supported by UNICEF.

32. UNICEF support for WASH activities will also be determined by the priorities and structure of the UNICEF-Government country programme in the context of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the UNDAF and the common United Nations country support programmes being introduced as of 2007. This will require UNICEF to work even more closely with other United Nations agencies to agree on respective roles and responsibilities in support of national development policies and programmes that would lead to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as well as on common operating procedures.

33. UNICEF contribution in terms of resources alone will be very modest; the major contribution will result from the organization's unique position and standing within the sector, where UNICEF is acknowledged as a key stakeholder by both governments and civil society. UNICEF also brings a global staff cadre of over 200 professionals working in long-term missions in more than 50 countries, and an additional team of professional advisors at the regional and global levels.

34. The three packages of support represent an evolutionary development from the 1995 Water and Environmental Sanitation strategies and are based on lessons learned over the last decade and a changing programming context. The new strategy puts a greater focus on hygiene, water quality, emergency programming, interventions at the household level, capacity-building at the intermediate level, the

scaling-up of national programmes and sustainability. Also new in this strategy is the definition of targets over a 10-year period, and the wider role of UNICEF in stimulating momentum to reach these in a sustainable manner. Specific strategies for emergencies and non-focus countries, and the positioning of the UNICEF WASH programme within the global poverty reduction campaign further widen the scope of the new approach.

35. The principles of rights-based programming and pro-poor approaches dictate that the urban poor should not be left out of national WASH programmes. Neither WASH target will be achieved if poor urban areas are ignored. While UNICEF is not in a position to expand its support to urban areas in a significant way, it can make an important contribution by the following means: advocating with governments and partners active in urban WASH (including the development banks, UN-Habitat, and the Water and Sanitation Program) to increase resource allocation to water and sanitation systems for the urban poor; providing technical support in the application of low-cost sanitation technologies to poor urban areas; and ensuring that national hygiene promotion programmes also target the urban poor. In emergency situations, UNICEF will continue to be active in urban areas as determined by the CCCs and national emergency response coordination agreements.

C. Strategies for priority countries

36. Comprehensive programmes of support in the 60 priority countries will be guided by the seven strategies described below, intended to address specific gaps in sector development or areas where progress is required if targets are to be met, as well as by the four strategies in the basic support package (see section E).

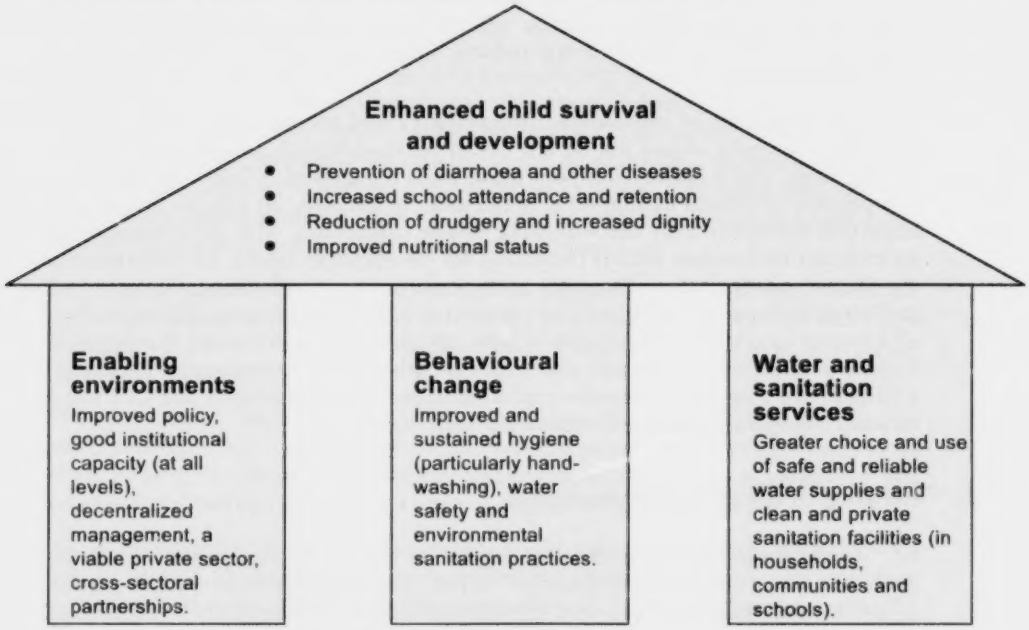
37. As the United Nations reform process accelerates, the WASH programme will increasingly focus on supporting governments in the achievement of national sector objectives, including the articulation of targets, indicators, budgets and strategies. National capacity development, including performance-monitoring and risk assessments, will be emphasized. Key roles include support for the analysis of policy options, needs-assessments and mapping of national capacities, support for equity and distributional analysis and empowerment, support for data and monitoring tools and the promotion of knowledge networking, as well as bringing agreed international norms and standards into the development process. The WASH programme will equally the support capacity-building of civil society organizations, local communities and other development stakeholders to facilitate their participation in policy development and budgeting processes.

1. Promoting a balanced national WASH programming framework

38. A balanced WASH programme has three interdependent pillars: interventions to increase safe water and sanitation coverage, the promotion of behavioural change, and support to an enabling policy and institutional environment (see figure 2).

39. UNICEF will use its position as an advocate, facilitator and sector coordinator to promote balanced approaches throughout the sector by encouraging modifications in national programme designs and budgets; by identifying gaps and needs; and by facilitating the development of partnership frameworks that pool competencies and resources. UNICEF support will generally include interventions within all three pillars of the framework, with different levels of emphasis on each area as determined by the national context.

Figure 2
Three pillars for effective and sustainable WASH programmes


Enhanced child survival and development
Prevention of diarrhoea and other diseases
Increased school attendance and retention
Reduction of drudgery and increased dignity
Improved nutritional status
Enabling environments
Improved policy, good institutional capacity (at all levels), decentralized management, a viable private sector, cross-sectoral partnerships.
Behavioural change
Improved and sustained hygiene (particularly hand-washing), water safety and environmental sanitation practices.
Water and sanitation services
Greater choice and use of safe and reliable water supplies and clean and private sanitation facilities (in households, communities and schools).

Source: Based in part on the Hygiene Improvement Framework, developed by the United States Agency for International Development Environmental Health Project.

2. Supporting intersectoral approaches

40. Maximum child survival and development benefits are realized when water supply, sanitation and hygiene programmes are coordinated or integrated with other sectoral programmes. Diarrhoeal disease is best tackled, for example, through preventive and curative interventions involving inputs from the health, education, nutrition and WASH sectors. Increased use of safe water and sanitation facilities and improved hygiene practices contribute significantly to public health programmes in general. WASH interventions — such as improved sanitation for people living with HIV/AIDS and water supply and sanitation facilities in health posts — contribute to the quality of health programmes, as do provisions to support the productive uses of water, which also lead to improved nutrition and economic gains.

41. UNICEF will continue to design and demonstrate intersectoral approaches, as one of the best ways to ensure positive impact and sustainability, and to take advantage of opportunities for synergy.

3. Providing catalytic and continuous support for scaling-up sustainable WASH programmes

42. UNICEF support for scaling up effective approaches in water supply, sanitation and hygiene education will be guided by internationally agreed modalities for aid management, as laid down in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Thus, the WASH programme will support efforts to harmonize and

align aid delivery and to accelerate progress towards strengthening national development strategies and operational frameworks.

43. UNICEF, with its track record of working with government and non-government actors at all levels, is well positioned to support the scaling-up of sustainable models for service delivery, which involves four interlinked steps: demonstration, advocacy, capacity-building and continuous monitoring of new approaches. In some cases, projects have begun and ended at the demonstration phase, and the models developed have not been replicated on a wider scale. UNICEF-supported programmes will ensure that more emphasis is placed on scaling-up effective models, applying lessons learned. Particular attention will be given to capacity-building and ensuring that the requisite financing and policy changes are in place to allow new approaches to be taken to scale.

44. Providing new infrastructure to unserved populations is important, but it is equally important to ensure that the new services are sustainable. System breakdown rates are high, up to 50 per cent in some countries. As a result, a significant proportion of past sector investments have not resulted in lasting benefits.

45. Increased coverage in sustainable services cannot be obtained simply by drilling more boreholes or even by training more community management groups. Sustainability depends on many factors, including participation by communities and households (especially women and children) in programme/project planning, design, implementation, operation and maintenance; a range of technologies that are within the means of communities and households to operate and maintain; the existence of functional supply chains for spare parts and supplies; the technical, financial and institutional support capacity of intermediate-level actors; and the existence of enabling and supporting legislation. Sustainability will be a central design element in all UNICEF-supported WASH programmes.

4. Ensuring effective decentralization and community choice

46. UNICEF has a long history of supporting community management in rural WASH service delivery. Outside support, though reduced, continues to be required, particularly at the intermediate level. Actors at this level, who are typically led by local government, are the main duty bearers in WASH service delivery. They support communities in planning and implementing schemes, train community representatives and ensure backup support. This continuum of support involves many elements of civil society, including the public and private sectors, NGOs, educational institutions and extension services. Skills, knowledge, resources and motivation, mutual respect and understanding between levels and partners are all prerequisites to success. UNICEF and its partners will help in building these prerequisites and in ensuring their quality.

47. In a climate of decentralization and public sector reform, UNICEF will continue to support national governments in formulating policy, and providing financial, technical and capacity-building support. To change the modus operandi, shifting responsibilities and resources to lower levels, sustained and comprehensive inputs will be required from UNICEF and other external support agencies for the necessary capacity-building, role definition and identification of appropriate national models.

48. Piloting, when it takes place, should be within a broad-based platform, or 'learning alliance', of the stakeholders required for up-scaling. UNICEF will help to support learning pilots and to ensure that successful pilot experiences can permanently transform large-scale programmes.

5. Promoting safe and sustainable water supplies through improved water resources management

49. The gains made in water supply coverage are increasingly threatened. Fierce competition for a shrinking water-resources base is resulting in over-extraction for industry and agriculture, falling groundwater levels and failing domestic water sources. At the same time, aquifers tapped for domestic use increasingly have unsafe levels of naturally occurring contaminants, including arsenic and fluoride. Meanwhile, pollution (from industry, agriculture and in some cases from the mass disposal of faeces into the environment) threatens previously safe water sources.

50. Protecting and managing the water environment is an enormous task, requiring commitment, effective monitoring, changing practices and specific interventions at regional, national, intermediate and community levels. No agency has the resources to tackle this issue on its own; at the same time, no stakeholder in the sector, can ignore the challenge.

51. Though UNICEF involvement will vary depending on factors such as water scarcity and pollution problems, all UNICEF WASH programmes in every priority country should include an element of water protection and conservation. Specific support will focus on community management of local water resources, including rainwater harvesting (for use by households and schools, and groundwater recharge), micro-watershed management and operational research. Where appropriate, these efforts will be supplemented with the increased promotion of solar and wind energy systems. UNICEF will work closely with partners, particularly WHO, to ensure that national policies support effective water-quality monitoring, and where necessary, improvement programmes.

52. UNICEF will ensure that supported approaches in improved management of water resources equally benefit poor and disadvantaged communities and households, and that interventions do not in any way deteriorate the quality of the water environment. UNICEF will use its position as one of the leading agencies in the WASH sector to bring the needs of the sector to the table in water resource management forums, as well as to catalyse and facilitate the involvement of other WASH actors in such forums.

6. Focusing on sanitation, water quality and hygiene at the household level

53. There is increasing evidence that a greater focus on the household level increases the effectiveness of sectoral programmes, especially in the areas of sanitation, water quality and hygiene promotion. UNICEF will continue to promote affordable, safe household toilets, home water treatment and improved household hygiene.

54. While UNICEF continues to be involved in institutional sanitation (primarily in schools and in health centres) and may support communal sanitation alternatives (mainly in emergencies), its focus will continue to be on safe and affordable sanitation in households. UNICEF will support appropriate and affordable 'ladders'

of technology options for home toilets, and approaches that create demand for home toilets and improve the supply of goods and services to meet such demand. These approaches will not depend on household subsidies, but rather will encourage community-based approaches for 'total sanitation' that seek to eliminate the practice of open defecation, while enabling the poorest, including female-headed households, to build their toilets without undue duress. Where possible, ecological sanitation will be promoted on the basis of its cultural and social acceptance.

55. Water quality is another key issue at the household level. Water from many so-called improved sources is contaminated because of poorly maintained or intermittently pressurized networks or untreated and contaminated source water. Even when the water source itself is safe, water used for drinking and cooking is often contaminated because of poor water-handling practices and unsafe storage. Household water treatment can help ensure the safety of domestic water and has been shown to have a significant impact on the prevention of diarrhoea, especially in young children. The measure should be part of comprehensive water safety programmes, including source protection. UNICEF will accordingly support programmes that promote improved systems and technologies for the treatment of water at the household level, relying chiefly on household investment and initiative.

56. Hygiene promotion that focuses on key household practices (washing hands with soap after defecation and before handling food, and the safe disposal of children's faeces) is also an effective way to prevent diarrhoea, especially among young children, who spend most of their time at home. Experience shows that informed and motivated children are powerful advocates for improved hygiene in the home. UNICEF expertise in working with children will be applied to help improve unsafe hygiene practices in households.

7. Addressing a child's right to health and education through WASH in schools

57. Children have a right to education, and to a safe and healthy environment. Providing WASH in schools directly meets both requirements. Children who are busy collecting water or are exhausted by the drudgery involved often miss school or its full benefit. Some children, especially girls who have attained the age of menarche, may be put off from attending school (or their parents might refuse to let them attend) if facilities are filthy, too few, shared with boys, or non-existent. Children who do go to such schools may face health risks because of the unsanitary conditions.

58. Providing children with safe, clean and reliable school WASH facilities helps to make the learning environment pleasant and healthy. Providing children with high-quality hygiene education helps to give them the basis for a healthy and productive life, creates future demand for safe water and sanitation facilities and, where integrated with a community programme, can help to turn children into change agents for the whole community.

D. Strategies for countries in crisis and transition

59. Children affected by natural disasters, conflict and instability have the same rights as children everywhere. UNICEF is thus committed to responding in emergencies, which in recent years have increased in both number and complexity.

The scope of this commitment has been codified in the CCCs that include specific hygiene, sanitation and water supply activities.

60. UNICEF emergency interventions build on existing programmes and partnerships, working within the objectives of the country programme and nationally defined development priorities. Hygiene, sanitation and water supply activities in emergencies are informed by the same guiding principles and strategies as those for priority countries.

61. Emergency responses, like national programmes, must be balanced. While the provision of water may take precedence in the early stages of an emergency, sanitation and hygiene inputs are also critically important, as is strengthening national institutional response and coordination capacity. UNICEF, in its role as advocate of balanced approaches, can help to ensure that the best possible mix of interventions is applied in emergency situations.

62. UNICEF has defined four key strategies to guide emergency WASH programming in 2006-2015.

1. Emergency preparedness planning

63. Preparedness is the key to timely and effective response in emergencies, and UNICEF will ensure that it is prepared to fulfil the water, sanitation and hygiene programme commitments contained in the CCCs. UNICEF will support national efforts for preparedness planning for WASH as part of its commitment to develop preparedness plans in all the countries in which it works (see Section E).

64. The stockpiling and pre-positioning of key emergency supplies is highly effective in mitigating the effects of emergencies, especially in countries that experience cyclical emergency events such as cholera outbreaks, droughts and floods. In priority countries where UNICEF supports a comprehensive WASH programme, UNICEF will contribute supplies to national emergency stockpiles as appropriate, and in other countries will advocate for the creation of stockpiles or other rapid supply deployment mechanisms.

2. Coordinating emergency response

65. UNICEF is a key support agency for WASH interventions in emergencies and often acts as the focal point for coordinating WASH emergency interventions. In 2005, the IASC designated UNICEF to lead the inter-agency cluster working group on water supply and sanitation in emergencies. The cluster working group includes, among other organizations, WHO, Oxfam Great Britain, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

66. In emergencies, UNICEF will ensure that national sector coordination mechanisms are activated quickly and used as the basis for the emergency response. Using existing coordination bodies will ensure that key sectoral stakeholders are consulted, and that the best available in-country resources are rapidly mobilized.

3. Acceleration and adaptation of existing programmes

67. UNICEF has a key comparative advantage in many emergency countries where the organization already supports WASH programmes in the field and has an

extensive network of partners at the national, intermediate and community levels. In some situations, the fastest and most effective response is the rapid mobilization and redeployment of these resources.

68. UNICEF will ensure that existing programme assets (including its own staff and staff from partner and contracted agencies, in addition to equipment and supplies) are made available as appropriate. A number of standby arrangements with key partners will help ensure that the necessary surge capacity is in place for major emergencies.

4. Strengthening the sector through emergency response

69. Emergency programmes must not only meet the immediate needs of affected children and their families but also reinforce national systems and sector capacity. This is especially important in large-scale and long-term emergency response programmes and in programmes to support the transition from emergency response to development programming.

70. In its role as IASC cluster lead for water supply and sanitation, UNICEF will ensure that emergency interventions supported by the cluster agencies conform to national norms and standards as much as possible. UNICEF will also ensure that inputs during emergency, early recovery and reconstruction phases reinforce best practices in the sector and contribute to national priorities as defined by governments, UNICEF and partners. Wherever possible, sector coordination set up for the emergency phase will be continued into the early recovery and development phases.

E. Strategies in other countries

71. In all other programme countries, country offices will support a basic package of WASH activities. These activities will be limited to advocacy and technical support in the following four areas.

1. Improving hygiene awareness and promoting behaviour change

72. UNICEF programming presence worldwide presents an opportunity to increase emphasis on hygiene promotion, even in countries without a UNICEF-supported WASH programme. Through its years of WASH programming in priority countries, UNICEF has accumulated experience and expertise in hygiene promotion that can be readily shared with other countries.

73. Advocacy and technical support for hygiene promotion activities will be carried out by country offices either as stand-alone initiatives or as complementary activities to programmes, including early childhood development, health and immunization. UNICEF education programmes are appropriate vehicles for technical assistance in hygiene education in schools and the development of hygiene education modules in school curricula, as well as for advocacy for separate toilets for boys and girls in schools and adequate washing facilities.

2. Drinking water quality

74. Combined analysis of data from sanitary inspections and on water quality can be used to identify the most important causes of drinking water contamination and

related control measures. In recent years, UNICEF (in partnership with WHO) has increasingly supported water-safety planning, water-quality monitoring and improvement programming. UNICEF competency in this area is a valuable resource for governments and partners even in countries where UNICEF has no significant ongoing WASH programme. UNICEF will continue to work closely with WHO and other partners to ensure that national policies support effective water-quality monitoring and where necessary, improvement programmes.

75. UNICEF will provide technical support in countries as appropriate for the development of water safety plans and national water-quality monitoring and improvement initiatives. In countries with specific water-quality problems, UNICEF will provide advice and technical support as necessary.

3. WASH emergency preparedness

76. UNICEF is committed to preparing and regularly updating emergency preparedness plans in all the countries in which it works. These plans are prepared in consultation with governments and partners and include WASH components in accordance with the CCCs. Drawing on its competencies in emergency WASH programmes, UNICEF will provide appropriate assistance to governments and other stakeholders in the development of national plans for WASH emergency preparedness.

4. National monitoring for achievement of Millennium Development Goals

Target 10

77. As the focal agency for sector monitoring, along with WHO, UNICEF will provide technical support to governments for sector monitoring in countries with a programming presence.

78. Supporting the monitoring of Target 10 in all countries will also provide an opportunity for UNICEF country offices to engage with national sectoral stakeholders on key sectoral issues, including hygiene promotion and water quality.

IV. Implications for UNICEF

A. Programme funding

79. Implementing the new WASH packages of support will require an increase in funding to UNICEF from the current level of $160 million to a target of $250 million per year. Most funds will be used in the 60 priority countries, with leveraging to take place for the far greater funding needed to reach Target 10 in conjunction with partners. This funding target is expected to be achievable, given the fact that UNICEF expenditure on WASH has increased at an annual rate of 17 per cent over the last five years, and that there is renewed interest in the sector due to the Millennium Development Goals.

B. Staffing, resources and organizational structures at the country level

Priority countries

80. To develop comprehensive programmes with government and other partners to meet the targets, UNICEF must have the ability to work effectively at the community, intermediate and national levels and to influence policy, strategies, national resource allocation decisions and technology choice.

81. To achieve these objectives, certain institutional and resource prerequisites must be met:

(a) **Full programme status.** WASH must have full section status within the country office and must be a full programme within the Country Programme Action Plan. Experience from country offices has shown that without this, effectiveness of programming and advocacy is compromised.

(b) **Adequate in-country staffing.** The WASH team must include a senior team leader and a sufficient number of long-term professional and support staff with appropriate qualifications. No priority country should have fewer than two professional WASH staff members, and most such countries will require more.

(c) **Specialist backup.** In-country UNICEF staff will not always have the capacity to develop and implement all facets of a comprehensive package of support. Backup will be provided by regional offices and through partnerships with specialist WASH organizations and consultants as appropriate.

(d) **Sufficient funds.** Funding requirements will vary from country to country, depending on the scope of the programme and the degree to which programme components are funded by governments and partners. Most priority countries will require a minimum annual WASH budget of $1.5 million. Larger countries, and countries with greater requirements, will require significantly larger budgets.

Emergency countries

82. Effective emergency response requires the quick mobilization of qualified staff members professional support from partner agencies, qualified consultants or private sector agencies. Country-level emergency planning will be coupled with a human resources support and referral system.

83. The UNICEF role in emergencies should increasingly focus on planning, short-term response, medium-term coordination, and long-term support for the transition from an emergency to a development programme. As the IASC designated sector lead agency for emergencies, UNICEF is mandated to lead coordination efforts nationally, regionally and globally. To better fulfil this role, UNICEF will develop a support and referral system, including a global emergency coordinator, a cadre of regional WASH advisors with emergency expertise, and a roster of pre-qualified agencies and individuals.

Other countries

84. Country offices implementing the basic WASH package will rely heavily on WASH professionals in other countries in the region, regional offices and

headquarters. Instead of using full-time WASH professionals, most country offices will rely on other staff to serve as WASH focal points.

85. Support will take the form of periodic visits from regional WASH advisors and qualified professionals from regional and global rosters for the development of hygiene promotion packages and emergency preparedness plans and for technical support in water quality and sector monitoring. Information and support will also be provided for the training of WASH focal points.

C. Support from regional offices and headquarters

86. Over the last 10 years, country WASH programmes have been supported by a small team in headquarters and, in some cases, part-time focal points in regional offices and country-level WASH staff members, who also provide support in neighbouring countries. To achieve the WASH targets, UNICEF capacity for advisory and programme support from headquarters, and especially from regional offices, will need to be enhanced.

87. The process of strengthening regional offices with dedicated WASH professionals has already been initiated. Regional WASH advisors will provide support for the implementation of all three UNICEF WASH packages. The emphasis on each type of support will vary from region to region, as will the number of specialized WASH advisory posts required in each regional office.

88. The team of advisors in headquarters will continue to provide programming direction and technical support to regional and country offices to develop and refine WASH strategies and priorities. Headquarters WASH staff will also continue to manage UNICEF staff capacity-building (in partnership with the Division of Human Resources) through the design and management of training programmes and the production and dissemination of guidelines and other training materials. The headquarters team will continue to lead fund-raising efforts (together with the Programme Funding Office) targeting both traditional and new donors.

89. The team in headquarters will play an increasingly important role in promoting technological innovation in UNICEF WASH programmes. UNICEF will build new partnerships, especially in the private sector, to identify and develop low-cost, reliable, and user-friendly technologies in water supply, water quality and sanitation.

90. Also at the global level, UNICEF will work with WHO and other partners to further strengthen the JMP. Efforts will focus on building monitoring capacity at the country level, increasing the utility and relevance of the JMP through improved data quality, compatibility and disaggregation, and ensuring that the JMP better address the issue of water quality and sustainable access.

D. UNICEF staff capacity-building

91. Challenging targets and expanding programmes will require increasing the number of WASH professional staff and ensuring that they posses the necessary skill sets. This will be achieved through the recruitment of new staff and stepped-up training and professional development for existing staff. UNICEF will continue to use, in a judicious manner, the services of outside agencies and consultants to fill gaps, carry out temporary assignments and perform specialized tasks.

92. Capacity-building will focus on the development of skills in newer programming areas, including learning and knowledge management, intermediate level capacity-building, integrated water resources management and household water treatment. At the same time, competency will be reinforced in the areas of programme management, strategic planning, hygiene promotion and communication, participatory approaches (including the Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation approach, as well as tools for promoting the participation of children), advocacy and policy development, emergency preparedness-planning and coordination, school-based programming and human rights-based approaches to programming.

E. Working with partners

93. UNICEF will expand its work with allies at all levels, focusing on developing partnership frameworks that address specific needs and can leverage resources for scaling up programmes. Existing and potential partners include local and national governments, United Nations agencies, bilateral donor agencies, specialist WASH organizations, NGOs, funding foundations, research institutes and the private sector.

94. Within the United Nations system, UNICEF will continue to work with sister agencies on a variety of programmes, including with WHO for sector monitoring, WFP for school-based feeding and water and sanitation programmes, UN-Habitat for peri-urban assistance and the United Nations Environment Programme for environmental improvements. The UNDAF and the United Nations Water inter-agency mechanism for coordinating activities among agencies are promoting more coherent approaches at the global and country levels. UNICEF will continue to pursue opportunities for joint programming at all levels. The International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015 represents a significant opportunity to promote new partnerships, attract funds and accelerate efforts towards the achievement of the sector target. UNICEF will continue to liaise and support the United Nations Advisory Board for Water that reports directly to the Secretary-General. UNICEF and the Water and Sanitation Program are collaborating on a number of initiatives. UNICEF will also reinforce cooperation with the World Bank in supporting national water supply and sanitation programmes, particularly in the rural sector. In Africa, UNICEF will coordinate its efforts closely with the African Development Bank in support of the Bank's Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative.

95. UNICEF will also intensify its engagement with the private sector. Country programmes will continue to promote private entrepreneurship, especially at the intermediate and community levels, where there are opportunities for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of programmes. Work will be done with partners to promote the necessary institutional reforms (tax reforms, access to credit, improved communication systems, etc.) to facilitate entrepreneurship. Partners in this area will include latrine artisans/marketers, manufacturers of pumps and pipes, village pump mechanics, spare parts distributors, and media and communication companies. UNICEF will also expand its relationship with larger companies, moving beyond fund-raising to tap the marketing and technical resources of companies to achieve common goals such as the promotion of hand-washing and household water treatment. Companies both large and small are key UNICEF partners in the

development of appropriate and accessible technologies for a range of programme areas, including water purification and extraction.

96. At the country level, where UNICEF enjoys longstanding relationships and legitimacy with governments, the organization is uniquely positioned to link NGOs, community-based organizations and the private sector with governments and facilitate more effective joint initiatives. UNICEF will continue to work within a variety of national partnership frameworks, including sector coordination forums, SWAps and joint programmes under UNDAF.

V. Draft recommendation

97. It is recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following draft recommendation:

The Executive Board

Endorses the "UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene strategies for 2006-2015" (E/ICEF/2006/6) as the UNICEF official strategy document for programmes of support in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene.